

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Congress excels at doing nothing; but sometimes doing nothing or empty political posturing, as we've just seen from the Republican majority, ignores our Nation's critical needs.

By leaving town without extending unemployment insurance, the 2.3 million long-term unemployed Americans who want to work and can't find work in this economy is especially cruel on the eve of the Christmas season. And for 48 million seniors and disabled, the new year will dawn with a 28-percent decrease in physicians' reimbursement. Many will find that they can't get in to see a doctor. It will be slammed in their face.

So with these actions, or rather these inactions by the Republican majority, they truly embody the spirit of the season: the Grinch.

CONGRATULATING CHRIS CARNEY

(Mr. McHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend, Chris Carney, on taking the oath of office to the State Senate in North Carolina.

Chris has served as a town commissioner for the last number of years. I was able to work with him on that board. He developed a reputation as a thoughtful leader, someone who listened to his constituents and actually tried to craft solutions. He'll take that same mentality to the State Senate in North Carolina. So today I rise to congratulate Chris Carney. His community is proud of him, and I'm proud to call him a friend.

I know his wife and his three children are very excited about the role he is about to undertake. Congratulations, Chris.

UNEMPLOYED IN AMERICA

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want the 2.3 million unemployed Americans to know that not all Members of this House are heartless. In fact, 193 Members of this House stand with the unemployed of this country, the 2.3 million mothers and fathers who have children and families to feed as we move through this very, very poignant holiday season.

I hope when we come back in January we can do what's right for America. But we fell 36 votes short.

That's because the Republicans, and I hardly see any of them on the floor at this point, care more about taking care of those who earn over a million dollars than they do about the people who are falling off the edge.

I feel sorry for our country today. But you know what? The American

people have a way of righting the tables when they get sadly out of balance, and that moment is coming.

I feel sorry for the people who are unemployed. Be strong during this season, know that when we return in January, we have a chance to correct what sadly was voted down today.

COME TOGETHER

(Mr. WOODALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to address the House this afternoon, but it has been a painful thing for me to listen to this debate today. I'm a freshman in this body, and my understanding was when I showed up here that we would work here and that the Senate would work there, and we wouldn't always come up with the same answers, and that we would also get to together and sort it out.

To have that process derided today as being a bastardization of politics, instead of what exactly the Founding Fathers want us to do, has me confused.

The gentlelady who spoke right before me, and I'm sorry she left the floor right after she derided Republicans for having left the floor, she's now gone, talked about Republicans wanting to see folks on unemployment have those benefits run out.

Mr. Speaker, it was before you and I got here, but four times in 2010 under Democrat control, unemployment benefits ran out. Now, you always did the right thing. You always sorted it out. But those kinds of things happen. We're going to conference today. We have 10 days to get this right.

We got the Defense authorization bill right in 7 days. And the Senate crafted their so-called compromise in 3 days. Surely, we can do better for the American people; and, Mr. Speaker, that's not a partisan divide. That's America at its best. I welcome my colleagues to join us in that.

□ 1630

OUR BRAVE TROOPS, HOME ON AMERICAN SOIL

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, last week, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta declared an end to the war in Iraq, fulfilling President Obama's pledge to bring the war to a responsible close. This marks an important milestone for the U.S., and it symbolizes our redefined relationship with a sovereign Iraq.

Thanks to the resilience and bravery of our soldiers and civilian personnel, all U.S. combat troops in Iraq will be home by the end of the year. I want to congratulate them on being able to share their holiday seasons together again.

We also honor the memory of lost heroes, and we renew our commitment to

ensure that our new generation of veterans receives the services and care we promised and the veterans earned.

At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, our commitments to help veterans is more important than ever to ensure they successfully transition their talents here at home for the good of our economy and our country.

On behalf of the Missouri citizens I represent, I wish our brave troops and all their loved ones a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year home on American soil.

AN INSULT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I want to follow my friend from Missouri and add my appreciation to the troops who have come home and to their families, and I thank my colleagues for joining in wearing a yellow ribbon in honor of them. I hope they will go home and do the same and will encourage their communities to do so.

But I am standing here to confront the hypocrisy and the joke of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in suggesting that the conferees are meeting when they full well know that no conferees are meeting, because no one has been appointed except the one-sided conferees.

Frankly, they want us to be Americans first, not Tea Partiers, not lovers of the special interests. The other body put forward a very thoughtful initiative to keep us going so that the lights will not be turned off in some poor mother's home and so that some senior citizen can still go to his doctor. They wanted to make sure 2.3 million and 134,000 people in Texas would have their unemployment. I'm saddened by this crisis. I'm here to work. I'm going home for an emergency, and I'll be back.

The lady who went off the floor should not have been confronted that way. She spoke. She's ready to work. What about the empty chairs on the other side? They are not ready to work. It's all about a joke. This is an insult to the American people.

NO TAX CUTS UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. I didn't think I'd have to take to the floor again; but now that the House Republicans have walked away from the American people, it bears notice.

There are 160 million American people across this country who are going to see their taxes go up come January 1. There are 2.3 million Americans, including 46,000 of them in my home